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Inside the PLO — a close-up on TV

Documentary examines why Palestinians oppose peace pact and what they may do

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The Christian Science Monitor

New York

Why the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and its supporters oppose an Egyptian-Israeli peace settlement and what they have done and could still do to compel world attention to examine their own problem is dramatically told in "Terror in the Promised Land," an ABC television documentary due for broadcast Monday, Oct. 30, and previewed by this reporter.

In a unique 47-minute inside look at the Palestinian guerrilla movement, in its violent and nonviolent aspects, British writer-producer Malcolm Clarke (in a narration by Frank Reynolds) shows American audiences for the first time several news breaks:

- Close-up views and interviews with a Palestinian guerrilla leader in south Lebanon, Abu Jihad, and young guerrillas who are training for "suicide missions" inside Israel, in which they will almost certainly be killed.

- Confirmation that U.S. (not Arab) intelligence sources believe that Israeli counter-terrorist agents killed such past Palestinian leaders as Ahasan Kanafani, novelist and guerrilla spokesman, in Beirut; PLO representative Wael Zuwiater in Rome; Basel Kubeisi in Paris; and others.

- An interview with Ranaan Weitz, head of the Jewish National Fund, which controls much of the land and Jewish settlement activities in Israel. Mr. Weitz acknowledges that Israeli communities were built on former Arab land.

"Look," says Mr. Weitz, who agreed to speak with writer-producer Clark after Ariel Sharon, the Israeli Agriculture Minister and advocate of settlements in the occupied territories, declined; "we cannot escape from a historic fact . . . that Israel, among other things, . . . also created land out of marshes and so on . . . but we used Arab land for our survival. The problem and the issue is a clash between two justices.

"We had to live . . . and they [the Palestin-

ians] had to regain their dignity and their national self-expression, and the answer for such a situation is a painful compromise. There is no escape from that."

- An unusual glimpse of "Abu Hassan" (Hassan Ali Salmeh), whom Israeli and Western intelligence experts consider is responsible for past "Black September" terrorist attacks in Europe and elsewhere. Abu Hassan predicts that "American targets in the Middle East" will be hit in the wave of post-Camp David terrorism now being prepared by elements of the PLO.

Young guerrilla quoted

Because the Palestinians in the refugee camps and the Israeli-occupied territories feel betrayed by the West and by their fellow Arabs, one of the young guerrillas explains, "a man, to erase the shame of defeat . . . and to pave the way for his children, in order to have an identity someday . . . is ready to give his life. Because he has nothing else to lose."

Many Jewish or Israeli viewers may be shocked by the words of Elisa Zohar, a thoughtful and articulate Israeli settler from Baaram, an Israeli settlement built on land originally belonging to the Maronite Christian village of Birim. Since 1948 Birim's people have been evacuated from their destroyed homes near the Lebanese border, on Israeli Army orders, and not permitted to return despite intervention on their behalf by several leading Israeli statesmen and their own declared loyalty to the state of Israel.

Mrs. Zohar offers a parable by British Jewish writer Isaac Deutscher to illustrate her point that if Israelis and Palestinians had been able to behave reasonably and rationally toward each other, the present problem might not exist.

The Palestinian Arabs, she acknowledges, are "having to pay for the whole Jewish history" of oppression. "I accept it, I accept it," she says. "So we have a problem. Now these people [Palestinians], for 30 years, they still believe they will come back. And they raise their children with the dream of coming back to Birim."

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